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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1362 (2001) of 11 July 2001 by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) until 15 January 2002. The report covers developments since my report of 3 July 2001 (S/2001/661).

2. In accordance with its mandate, UNMOP continued to monitor the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula and the neighbouring areas in the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It conducted daily vehicle, foot and standing patrols throughout its area of responsibility and held periodic meetings with the local authorities in order to strengthen liaison, reduce tension, improve safety and security and promote confidence between the parties. The Chief Military Observer maintained contact with the authorities in Zagreb and Belgrade in order to address issues arising from the implementation of resolution 1362 (2001). He also maintained contact with the multinational Stabilization Force (SFOR).

II. Situation in the area of responsibility of the Mission

3. The situation in both the demilitarized and United Nations-controlled zones remained calm. UNMOP continued to maintain its 24-hour presence at the Ostra peninsula, at Herceg Novi, at the headquarters at Cavtat and at Gruda (see attached map). In November, the Republic of Croatia began a demining programme in a section of the northern demilitarized zone that is scheduled to continue until May 2002. There has been no systematic demining on the Yugoslav side.

Demilitarized zone

4. Under the security regime, there is no limit to the number of police who may be deployed in the demilitarized zone. As agreed between the parties, the Montenegrin Border Police and Special Police, and Croatian Intervention Police and regular uniformed police maintained control on their respective sides of the demilitarized zone. Following reductions in the static police presence on the Croatian side and a modest reduction in police numbers on the Yugoslav side, the number of police in fixed positions at both sides of the border is now at the lowest levels since UNMOP's inception. In addition to manning the fixed positions, the police on both sides conducted roving patrols throughout their respective areas of operation. Both parties respected the demilitarized zone during the reporting period with minor exceptions.

5. The United Nations military observers continued to enjoy unrestricted freedom of movement on the Yugoslav side of the demilitarized zone. On the Croatian side, the authorities have still not lifted their requirement that UNMOP provide written advance notice before undertaking foot or vehicle patrols in the northern part of the zone. Croatian police normally accompanied UNMOP's foot patrols in this area.

United Nations-controlled zone

6. The security regime in the United Nations-controlled zone provides that only United Nations

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personnel or persons authorized by UNMOP may enter the zone. Nonetheless, the deployment of police forces in the United Nations-controlled zone continued, although the number of personnel stationed there was reduced. Usually, eight Croatian police officers were located at two positions and two Montenegrin Border Police officers were stationed at one position inside the zone, the numbers of personnel varying from day to day. The Croatian police conducted regular foot and vehicle patrols throughout the parts of the zone to which they have access.

7. Croatian and Montenegrin police continued to operate checkpoints in the United Nations-controlled zone, which they had initiated in January 1999, and allowed limited movement by local civilians between Montenegro and the Republic of Croatia.

8. The Croatian authorities continued to permit civilians, including local and foreign tourists, to enter the United Nations-controlled zone for fishing, grazing of animals, recreation and the collection of firewood. The Montenegrin authorities also permitted civilians and tourists to enter the part of the zone overseen by them, though in substantially fewer numbers than on the Croatian side. During 2001, more than 85 per cent of the recorded unauthorized entries to the United Nations-controlled zone occurred from the Croatian side. The waters of the zone continued to be violated daily by small fishing or pleasure craft, which entered from both the Croatian and Montenegrin sides in approximately equal numbers.

9. On 21 September 2001, a twin-engine jet overflew the United Nations-controlled zone. As its flight path originated in Montenegro, a protest was lodged with the Montenegrin authorities. On 8 November 2001, Croatian workmen employed a trench-digger to lay a communications cable in the United Nations-controlled zone. The work continued until later that month. A protest was lodged with the Croatian authorities.

10. The activities described above, which involved the unauthorized presence of civilians and officials in the United Nations-controlled zone, as well as restrictions on the movement of United Nations military observers, while not a security threat as such, were violations of the agreed security regime.

III. Progress towards a negotiated settlement

11. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia have indicated repeatedly their willingness to resolve their dispute over Prevlaka through bilateral negotiations and have continued official contacts to this end. On 11 November 2001, the two Foreign Ministers met in New York and issued a joint statement, declaring, inter alia, the intention to set up an inter-state commission to address outstanding issues concerning the common border, both on land and at sea, and to examine further the issue of demilitarization.

12. In separate meetings with me on 14 November 2001, the Ministers told me of the commitment of both States to continue working bilaterally towards a peaceful, negotiated solution of the Prevlaka dispute. I expressed my support and assured them that the United Nations would be ready to assist, should it be required.

IV. Organizational and financial aspects

13. UNMOP has an authorized strength of 28 United Nations military observers. As of 1 January, the Mission comprised 27 military observers from Argentina (2), Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil (2), Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Ghana, Indonesia (2), Ireland (2), Jordan, Kenya, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Ukraine (2). Colonel Graeme Williams (New Zealand) continued as Chief Military Observer until 15 September, when he was succeeded by Colonel Rodolfo Sergio Mujica (Argentina).

14. Although an independent mission, UNMOP draws its administrative and budgetary support from the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH). By its resolution 55/268 of 14 June 2001, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of $140 million gross for the maintenance of UNMIBH for the 12-month period from 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002. Therefore, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNMOP beyond 15 January 2002, as recommended in paragraph 18 below, the costs of maintaining the Mission would be met from within the budget of UNMIBH.

V. Observations

15. I am pleased to inform the members of the Security Council that the situation in UNMOP's mission area remained calm during the reporting period. The steps taken by the parties to form an inter-state commission to address the issue of their common border are welcome as is the ongoing process of bilateral consultations. The good offices of the United Nations, including the package of confidence-building measures proposed in October 1999 (S/1999/1051, para. 20), continue to be available should the parties require this kind of assistance. UNMOP stands ready to assist in the development of practical arrangements to give effect to any agreement the parties may reach.

16. Nevertheless, despite the generally positive situation, violations of the agreed security regime continued. In the United Nations-controlled zone, the remaining small numbers of Croatian police and Montenegrin Border Police should be removed and the entry of unauthorized civilians to the zone by the two sides should be prevented. The illegal checkpoints at Cape Kobila, which interfere with the free movement of the United Nations military observers within the zone, should be removed to the boundaries of the zone or their continued operation regulated by an agreement. The Croatian authorities should lift their restrictions on the free movement of the United Nations military observers in the demilitarized zone.

17. I especially welcome the commencement of demining by the Republic of Croatia in the northern part of the demilitarized zone. Demining is obviously in the interest of the safety of the residents and of the United Nations military observers who patrol the area. It should be extended, as resources permit, to other areas of the demilitarized zone. The authorities on both sides should keep UNMOP fully informed of their activities in relation to minefields.

18. In order to ensure that the area remains calm and conditions are maintained that are conducive to reaching a negotiated settlement, I recommend that the mandate of UNMOP be extended for a further six months, until 15 July 2002. The Security Council may wish to request the parties to continue to report regularly on progress in their talks.

19. In conclusion, I should like to commend the Chief Military Observer and the men and women of UNMOP for their continued contribution to maintaining peace and security in their area of responsibility.

Map 4137 Rev. 5 United Nations
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